

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 HA-05 ACDA-12 IO-13 DOE-11 SOE-02 EB-08
INT-05 /115 W
-----102794 211801Z /41

R 211849Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4651
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 02021

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR
SUBJECT: LE MONDE SHARPLY CRITICAL OF CARTER
ADMINISTRATION

1. WHILE WE DO NOT USUALLY REPORT ON PRESS ARTICLES,
AN EDITORIAL BY ANDRE FONTAINE IN THE JANUARY 20
EDITION OF LE MONDE IS SO SHARPLY CRITICAL OF THE
CARTER ADMINISTRATION THAT WE CALL IT TO THE DEPART-
MENT'S ATTENTION. (TEXT TRANSMITTED TO USIA.) TONE OF
ARTICLE IS SARCASTIC AND THRUST IS THAT CARTER ADMINIS-
TRATION RAISED HOPES BY ESPOUSING HIGH MORAL VALUES,
BUT HAS NOW RETURNED TO THE "RUT" OF THE POLICIES OF
PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS.

2. FONTAINE BEGINS BY SARCASTICALLY RECALLING HIGH AIMS
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ORIGINALLY ENUNCIATED BY THE ADMINISTRATION: NO
COMPROMISE WITH TOTALITARIANISM, NO INTERFERENCE IN
INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, AN ALLIANCE OF
QUIET FORCE AND MORALITY. HE THEN QUOTES WALL STREET
JOURNAL AS INDICATING THAT ALL THAT REMAINS OF THESE
HIGH IDEALS IS "PRINCIPLED PRAGMATISM."

3. FONTAINE THEN GOES ON TO CRITICIZE US POLICY ON THE MAJOR THEMES OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IN SHARP AND UNBALANCED TERMS:

-- HUMAN RIGHTS: MODEST RESULTS IN BRAZIL AND USSR, BUT "VIRTUALLY LAUGHED AT" ELSEWHERE, SUCH AS ARGENTINA AND CHILE. US HAS "BECOME MUCH NICER" WITH MOSCOW, IS CAREFUL NOT TO RAISE HUMAN RIGHTS WITH CHINA, AND PRESIDENT CARTER "WENT TO TEHRAN TO CONGRATULATE THE SHAH."

-- ARMS CONTROL: CARTER ADMINISTRATION STARTED BY TRYING TO GET SOVIETS TO GIVE UP A QUARTER OF THEIR STRATEGIC VECTORS. "RESULT: TOTAL FAILURE. ARMS CONTROL POLICY IS LESS AND LESS DISTINGUISHABLE FROM THAT OF NIXON AND FORD."

-- ENERGY: U.S. IS WORLD CHAMPION ENERGY WASTER, AND PRESIDENT CARTER RAN INTO SOMEONE STRONGER THAN HE WAS IN PRESSING HIS ENERGY POLICY: THE OIL CARTEL.

INTERFERENCE IN AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES: ADMINISTRATION STATED WITH HIGH IDEALS BUT NOW DOES EXACTLY WHAT IT REPROACHED NIXON FOR DOING AND OPENLY VIOLATES THE HELSINKI ACCORDS WHICH EXCLUDED INTERFERENCE IN AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

THE ECONOMY: THE PRINCIPAL MEANS OF LIMITING THE DEFICIT IN EXTERNAL TRADE HAVE BECOME THE PROGRESSIVE DEVALUATION OF THE DOLLAR AND PROTECTIONIST MEASURES. FONTAINE CLAIMS IT WAS ACTUALLY INFLATION -- THAT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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AMERICA'S ALLIES -- WHICH PAID FOR VIETNAM AND THE MOON.

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4. FONTAINE CONCLUDES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS "A WELL-INTENTIONED NOVICE, HESITANT AND MAKING GAFFES," IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. FONTAINE IS ALSO CRITICAL OF NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR BRZEZINSKI, WHOSE IDEAS, HE AGAIN QUOTES WALL STREET JOURNAL AS SAYING, ARE "HOLLOW, INCONSISTENT OR EVEN WITHOUT ANY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DECISIONS ACTUALLY TAKEN." FONTAINE CONCLUDES THAT ONLY BONN -- AND NOT FRANCE -- CAN MAKE ITSELF HEARD BY THE U.S., AND THAT PARIS CONSIDERS IT "NORMAL" THAT THE U.S. SHOULD INTERFERE IN ITALIAN POLITICS.

5. COMMENT: THIS IS THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF LE MONDE'S TENDENCY TO BE CRITICAL OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. IT IS SO UNBALANCED (E.G. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GRATUITOUS THEORY THAT AMERICA'S ALLIES PAID FOR THE VIETNAM WAR THROUGH INFLATION OF THE U.S. DOLLAR) AS TO BE BARELY CREDIBLE EVEN WHERE HE CONSIDERS THAT U.S. OBJECTIVES ARE GOOD ONES -- AS ON HUMAN RIGHTS OR ENERGY -- HE SLANTS HIS ARTICLE SO AS TO PUT THE U.S. IN THE WORST POSSIBLE LIGHT. BUT THE FACT IS THAT FONTAINE'S ARTICLES APPEAR ON THE FRONT PAGE OF LE MONDE, OF WHICH HE IS THE EDITOR AND WHICH HAS APPROXIMATELY THE SAME INFLUENCE IN FRANCE AS THE NEW YORK TIMES IN THE U.S. FONTAINE'S VIEWS CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO POISON THE ATMOSPHERE OF U.S. - FRENCH RELATIONS. END COMMENT.
GAMMON

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